

## History: A Phantasmagoria of Madness

(By B. A. Koblegard, Weston, W. Va.)

The world's history is an interminable record of human misery. Its contemplation is unpleasant. No one can read it and be inspired. It is depressing to the ego. Neither do we expect the reader of this article to experience any of the novel essentials of the modern "uplift movement" threat. The sextant of reason as employed in determining our whereabouts in the economy of nature is not always agreeable to our liking maybe. It points mankind to the sloughs of despair filled with sardonic skeletons of dead and vanished hopes. In the lurid, misty glow of receding ages, the race strives to incipitate the category of folly and crime. The hideous saturnalia lasts throughout the centuries embracing all the peoples of the world in its mad idolatry. The flagellant passions of the ancients and medievalists lash at the emotions today with the same ruthless fury. The vampires and harpies of hate are entwined in the fabric of society like the serpents of the brow of Medusa. These monsters of the mind and heart—the arch hypocrites of piety and virtue, lie perdue for human toll, in the streets, by the fireside, in the churches, stores, courts, everywhere. Wretched pretense is the universal fashion. The business of life is conducted on the shifting basis of dishonesty.

But the world has never been so depraved and benighted that real would-be reformers have not interposed their phylacteric offices. At the present day they have their representation, among whom appears the name of that superman and arch enemy of hypocrisy and chicane, George Bernard Shaw, of England. This quibbling and enigmatical gentleman is sometimes pictured by his critics as being comuted. Perhaps Shaw enjoys this attributive comparison to Lucifer, for has not Mary McLane assured us in her literary pasquinade a few years ago that a devil has many of the traits of the gentleman of mankind. Shaw has divided the sheep from the goats and when he has finished the job maybe the Lord has smiled. A shaft from the quiver of his wit, barbed with his sarcasm, will rout any gathering of drawing-room reformers.

Despite the reformations of the middle ages and the employment of the gib word progress to describe the intellectual and ethical status of the race today, a comparison of the respective periods will prove that mankind has not evolved at all. With appreciation of the stupendous and research of the great Darwin and other evolutionists, the cloutish masterpieces of their labors, their supreme subject, the genus homo, reflects no credit on himself or adds confirmation to their theories of progression. In science and in other artistries, the world is advancing, but the heart of man is just as stony as that which pulsed in the breast of his Simian forbearer of the pleocene age. As further commentary of anthropological depravity, witness the present-day drama of wars being enacted on our terrestrial stage and the base and cruel motives operating back of these sacrificial rites to Mars; behold the destructive methods employed by the Socialists to enforce their reign; behold the true acts of feminist fanatics arson plots and their diabolic execution would turn Democritus, the jocund philosopher of Abdera, into mortification and tears, and derivate the refined art of demonology as obsolete and passe!

Were Schopenhauer, disciple of pessimism, a contemporary of our time, he would find nothing to retract. No smile would change the immobility of his Saturnine visage. With his mordant pen he could add chapter to his mournful works. He might devote a redolent chapter to our journalistic quidnuncs and paragraphers as being trouble-brewers and thorns in the side of the body politic. And he would defy and execrate anarchy in the guise of Socialism and its viperous retinue of soap-box demagogues. Also, with his rousing pen, he would have good grounds to eviscerate our statute books and cause their yokel makers to flee to the arboreal shades of silence. Certain of our recent legislative acts would particularly come under the ban of this iconoclast of fraud and hypocrisy and self-appointed disillusionist, while performing in his role of tearing inglorious wreaths from the contracted brows of would-be immortalists, fellow who has recently by an act of Congress sought to unsex a whole nation might be referred to as the country's most colossal bigot. Forsooth if Schopenhauer could come back he would be kept busy elaborating his famous studies in pessimism. It is a tenebrous subject, yet fascinating. Withal much of the folly and stupidity of human nature is laughable.

Abuses in all strata of the social world cry out for correction, but who are to hear and heed? The aural sense of mankind is blunted by his mode of living and thinking and cannot hear. The populace that the people are paramount in every issue and crisis has been infiltrated into the universal mind for ages; GAILEY—HISTORY the masses have been told by sophistical and machiavellian demagogues that their will is law and right, which statement is paradoxical, yet true and right and just. Mankind is gregarious and thinks and moves in groups and majorities. "Vox populi, vox dei" is a sophistry coeval with the inception of Roman history, but antedating this epoch really to the twilight dawn of man's expanding intellect. If, by deriding our powers from the consent of the governed meant benign and salutary civic conditions, the Empyrean fires of the ancients would long since have dissolved and transformed this world into an Utopia; but grimly, since it is anything else than such a spot, but rather the antithesis of the devoutly to be desired state, we might solemnly asseverate that the dictum that "the voice of the people is the voice of God," were a persistent blasphemy against the attributes of deity. But it is not to be expected

that the principles of popular government are logical, since its source is proletarian and unacademic. The average voter knows nothing about the constituents of our government and the great majority of them are composed of just such unappreciated units. However, the scope and purpose of popular suffrage is ideal if not practical. Ergo, popular government is an episteme—a nightmare.

And now having followed the portrayal of this gloomy picture of mankind, on whose wormwood-drooling lips the golden rule enunciated by Zoroaster and expounded by Christ is daily repeated in dissimulation without promulgation as to its potential transmutation into thought and action, the reader may ask, "Well, what?"

For answer, we would utter one word: "Nothing!" We do not know what concert of power will transform the world. We cannot su-perrogate the ability to furnish a catholicon, we would conclude by reciting the tragic denouement contained in the last chapter of a wretched book published several years ago, entitled "Caesar's Column," and written by Ignatius Donnelly. In this history, Socialism had triumphed; the golden era of promise and ease had seemingly come after capitalism and industry had been crushed. The greedy hoards of vultures had assembled in the square of a great city to celebrate. The last capitalist had been summarily dealt with and the big corporations were at last in a condition of innocuous desuetude. "Dividing up" time had arrived and money was plenty. The workers had a plethora of the coin of the realm in their pockets promised them by the campaign spellbinders. But this lurch in social and industrial conditions had developed a sudden stagnation in business. Everybody had "ready money," the phrase goes, but there was nobody now willing to do the mental work; the workers had become the leisure class and unprecedented chaos was imminent. The railroads which transported supplies were idle because the men who ran them had quit work for leisure. The tables had turned. Everybody had money with which to travel, but there were no persons willing now to do the discarded overalls and run the trains. Business stagnated universally. The millennium of Socialism had proved a chimera and nemesis. Thus the story closed; the author mercifully withheld the final scenes in a world tragedy that was inevitable.

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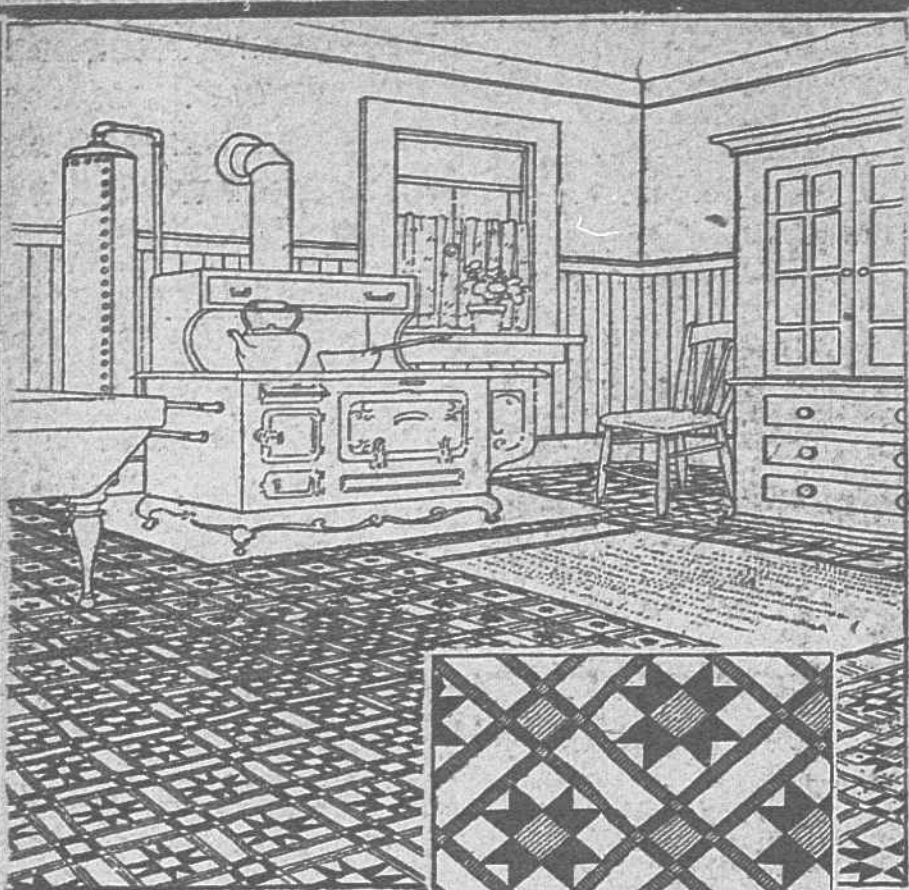


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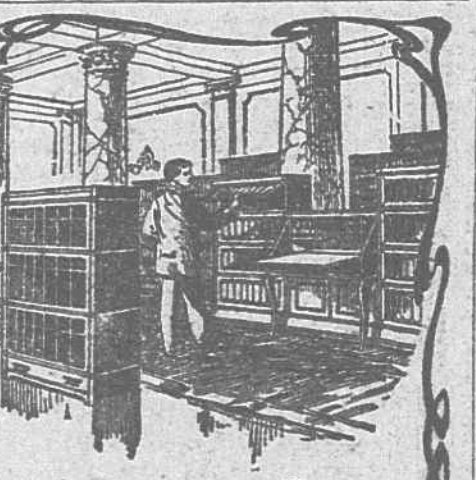
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